

the *RARS*

~~Exciter~~

Raleigh Amateur Radio Society



Worldwide Friendship

March 2000

Number 353

Sunday, April 9th **RARSFest 2000**

North Carolina State
ARRL Convention

**W4CC Wins
NC SM Election**

story on page 5

DJ-S11 HT
"Incentive Prize"
for Volunteers

Power Supply
"Bonus Prize"
for Security
Volunteers

**WANTS YOU
TO
VOLUNTEER**



The RARSfest runs on volunteers, and lots of 'em.

It starts on Friday afternoon, April 7th, when RARS **SET-UP** volunteers, directed by Bernard KC4UPX, pull all the tables and chairs into position, kick out the legs and stand them up, all according to the printed layout. They also pull power drops into position.

Saturday morning, the finishing touches are completed, and the Flea-Market and Commercial vendors begin to arrive at the West Door about noon. David N4YTO's **COMM CENTER** Talk-In operators will help them find the Fairgrounds on 146.64. Bernard's **SETUP** people check them in and point them to their tables. A **TICKET SELLER**

will sell them a ticket if they didn't order one in advance.

RARS members who will be working the fest and can't cover their own flea-market tables will drop off equipment to be sold at the **RARS TABLE**, run by Max KO4TV and his assistants (starting with his wife Ruth KE4DRI).

Slowly, the building fills up and begins to look more like a hamfest. It will be open until 10:00 PM, but at about 7, most everyone takes a break to enjoy food, conversation and sometimes entertainment at the **SOCIAL**, led this year by Mary Jo Littlewood and the RARS Crystals. Members

continued on page 3

The Exciter

The **Exciter** is the monthly newsletter of the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society. It is available in both printed and electronic form. The printed version is mailed to members just before each club meeting. The electronic form, in Adobe Acrobat PDF format, is e-mailed about a week earlier.

We solicit both articles and advertising. The deadline for submissions is the 15th of the prior month. Contact the Editor.

The views contained in the Exciter are those of the individual authors, and are not necessarily the views of the Editor, or the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society.

The Raleigh Amateur Radio Society

The Raleigh Amateur Radio Society, Inc. (RARS), was founded in 1969 and continues to serve and support the Amateur Radio community in the greater Triangle area. In 1999, RARS reincorporated and obtained 501(c)(3) Non-Profit tax status.

The objectives of the club are to promote worldwide friendship through Amateur Radio; to be of public service by providing radio communications in times of disaster, emergency, or civic need; to educate members in radio technique; and to provide training classes to assist in obtaining Amateur Radio licenses.

Anyone interested in Amateur Radio is eligible to apply for membership. Dues for regular licensed amateurs are \$18.00 per year (from July 1 through June 30). Additional immediate family members pay \$5.00 each per year. Dues for licensed amateurs older than 59 or younger than 16 are \$12.00 per year. Dues for non-licensed Associate members are \$9.00 per year.

Applications for membership may be obtained from the treasurer, or the RARS web site (www.rars.org).

Officers

President	Jack Ritter WØUCE 846-1848 gig38@aol.com
Vice-President	Tim Nicholson KF4RTX 501-7746 kf4rtx@arrl.net
Secretary	Jeff Wittich AC4ZO 362-9456 ac4zo@arrl.net
Treasurer	David Fix N4YTO 677-8320 dfix@pagesz.net
Exciter Editor	Gary Pearce KN4AQ 380-9944 kn4aq@arrl.net

Info

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Web Site:

<http://www.rars.org>



President's Corner

Jack Ritter WØUCE

Well, the big blizzard of Y2K has come and gone so we can now look forward to spring, RARS Fest, public service events and antenna parties. It is not too early to start thinking about Field Day and other club operating events as well.

Sorry to say I will miss RARS Fest again this year as I am going back to Asia on another business trip. Seems impossible for me to plan business and hamming so there is sufficient time for both activities. As usual there will be no opportunity to operate on this trip but will take along my trusty all band receiver so I can SWL once in a while. This jaunt will include twelve, maybe thirteen countries. Unfortunately I have already been to them before so will gain no new entries in my "DXCC in person log" this trip. Maybe some day I will make DXCC in person but so far am stuck with just 66 countries in my travel log. It is far easier to work them on HF than going in person.

I would like to thank Bob KG4FIO and his **RARS 2000** committee for working on suggestions and recommendations received from members at the January meeting. The committee has compiled and grouped suggestions into categories and will present items received thus far at the March meeting. Once the general membership has an opportunity to review recommendations, we plan to establish priorities and action plans for implementation. Please support and continue to provide input to the committee. I have received numerous positive comments regarding this approach to making RARS what we want it to be. Let's not lose momentum; RARS is your club and we all enjoy the benefits of what each member contributes.

When the new amateur licensing structure is implemented in April we can expect to see an increase in license upgrades. Question pools are already appearing on the web so now is the time to start brushing up on theory, rules, regulations and other licensing requirements. By all means let Charlie W4VFJ - RARS "Mr. Tester" know if you plan to take upgrade tests. If you are VE certified, please offer to lend Charlie a hand in conducting test sessions. Speaking of lending a hand, we should all pitch in to support club activities, the more the better, if we each do our share, those dedicated to heading up committee work won't feel like the Lone Ranger.

We can and should do all we can to lend a hand and promote our hobby. One suggestion I want to offer is setting up a RARS booth at the state fair this year. We could gain tremendous exposure for the hobby and let the public see first hand what Ham Radio is all about. Anyone care to head up planning and implementing this effort? "Hint, Hint."

QRU for now gang, the next President's Corner will come from somewhere across the pond via e-mail. While I am gone, I would love to hear what is going on back home, when you have a minute or two to spare, drop an e-mail to gig38@aol.com.

73, Jack

HAMFEST *continued from front page*

of the **SECURITY TEAM** begin combing the floor as equipment vendors are having dinner. At 10 PM, the doors are closed and locked, and an armed, professional security officer keeps watch through the night.

Sunday morning activity starts at 5:30 AM. The **COMM CENTER** is back in business. The **TICKET** and **SETUP** crews are in place at the West door, and at 6, more vendors begin filing in for the last-minute setup. The **STAGE**, supervised by Gary KN4AQ, is manned for Public Address announcements (most of which at this hour are reminders for vendors to set up quickly and get their vehicles out before we can open the doors). More **TICKET SELLERS** get ready for the 8 AM onslaught. **SECURITY** people man the doors to check tickets.

Soon enough, it's 8:00, the doors swing open, and eager hamfesters surge in. The **STAGE CREW** grows to three or four people to answer questions, take ticket stubs, make PA announcements, and give out prizes on the hour. Rick KA3PSK will supervise several **CONTESTS**, and will use some assistants to help judge homebrew equipment, and the QLF and QBH contests.

In the background, Chuck K4HF attends to the commercial exhibitors and makes sure the programs are going off on time. Hamfest co-Chairs Cyndi KD4ACW, and Tim KF4RTX, keep an eye on everything and solve about 100 minor and major problems an hour throughout the day.

Finally, it's 4 PM... quitting time. We gently shoo the last of the tired hamfesters out the door, and the vendors pack up and head out. It's time for the **TEARDOWN** crew to take over, directed by Dave Thomas K4SAN. These guys are sometimes called the "Dumpster Divers" - in addition to knocking down and stacking up all the tables, they root through all the equipment that was so valuable that not only did nobody buy it, but the owner didn't even want to cart it home one more time... and take half of it home themselves.

We estimate that it takes *over 500 man-hours* to put on the RARSfest. We couldn't do it without a lot of help from RARS members. Every year, we get that help, but we never take it for granted! Please contact one of the committee chairpersons listed below and volunteer for a job or two. Again this year, we'll give away a DJ-S11 HT to one of the fest workers in a drawing based on shifts worked. Security workers will also qualify for a power supply. Thanks for making RARSfest one of the best hamfests in the Southeast! ■

RARSfest COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Setup	Bernard Blackmon KC4UPX 467-8719, bernardb@mindspring.com
Stage	Gary Pearce KN4AQ 380-9944, kn4aq@arrl.net
Tickets	Volunteer Needed Contact Cyndi KD4ACW 380-7286, cyndi.pearce@sas.com
Comm Center	David Fix N4YTO 677-8320, dfix@pagesz.net

Teardown	Dave Thomas K4SAN 772-6338, k4san@ipass.net
RARS Table	Max Bloodworth KO4TV 787-0758, ko4tv@juno.com
Social	Mary Jo Littlewood 872-6555
Contests	Rick Merkle KA3PSK 835-0970, ramerk@us.ibm.com
Security	Ron Ford KG4FJA 772-9127, rjford@mindspring.com



The RARSfest Committee begins meeting in the fall to plan the next year's hamfest. It all comes together April 9th, 2000!

Antennas in the Attic

David Crawford KF4VXJ

Maybe you're new to Amateur Radio.

Maybe you have restrictive covenants that cover your residence, and there's someone in the subdivision that gets their jollies by demanding that the homeowners association enforce every little detail.

Maybe you want an antenna that you can operate with during severe weather, without worrying about a lightning strike frying your equipment.

Maybe you have a family member that is hung up on aesthetics, and thinks that anything bigger than a car cellular antenna is hideous looking.

Consider an inside attic "mount" antenna. For those of you with restrictive covenants, or other headaches, this will give some HF/VHF/UHF capabilities without drawing attention.

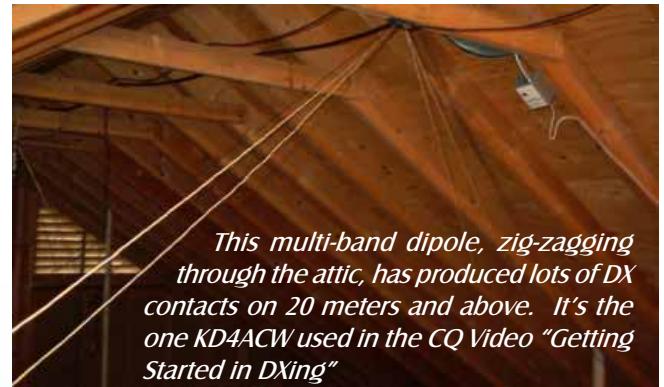
First, when it's comfortable in the attic, measure the height of the area you want to place the antenna in. Also, figure out how much "floor space" or horizontal clearance you have available. This will determine the types of antenna you should consider purchasing or building. (While you're there, if possible, move anything metal away from right around where you want to place your antenna.)

If you have enough vertical and horizontal clearance, you can use a vehicle mount antenna. Just remember that the antenna needs a ground plane to work against to provide a low SWR. The ground plane can be a large piece of sheet metal or wire mesh (strongly suggested), several strips of sheet metal, or several wires or rods. The strips



A mobile whip hangs from a rafter at the *KN4AQth*

or wires need to be at least 0.25 wavelengths of the lowest frequency you will transmit on. In the case of 2 meters, that is around 21 inches. For a single piece of sheet metal or metal mesh, a 3 ft by 3 ft square will suffice. Vertical clearance needed is at least 15 inches, for antennas such as the Comet B-10 and the Diamond NR728NMO. These two are low gain antennas, however, so get as much vertical clearance as possible. You are looking at a loss of 3-5 dB going



This multi-band dipole, zig-zagging through the attic, has produced lots of DX contacts on 20 meters and above. It's the one KD4ACW used in the CQ Video "Getting Started in DXing"

through the roof, so use the highest gain antenna you can accommodate or afford. Also, don't scrimp on the coax. Use a low loss coax like Davis RF's Flexi-4XL.

Any antenna mount will suffice as long as the mount and antenna are compatible, if you are going to use the sheet metal or metal mesh ground plane.

If you have plenty of vertical clearance, and not much horizontal clearance, consider using a commercially produced omnidirectional outside antenna inside the attic. For example, The Cushcraft AR270 requires just a bit under 4 ft vertical and just under 1.5 feet each direction horizontal. Just be sure to place some foam objects on the radial tips to prevent injuries. The author uses a Comet GP-15 as his storm antenna, which covers 6 meters, 2 meters, and 440 MHz.

If you are really tight for vertical and horizontal clearance, there is the last resort of a j-pole, a dipole, or remote mounting a rubber duck antenna as high in the attic as possible. You may need to build your own mount from a BNC or SMA connector, a bit of sheet metal, coax, and a PL-259 connector. Just get it as high inside the attic as possible without touching the roof, and DO NOT exceed the rated wattage of the antenna.

If you elect to go with a purchased antenna, make sure that it will at least work on 440 as well as 2 meters. If you like to experiment, consider building your own antennas, and using a duplexer (or triplexer) if needed, to connect them to your rig.

When operating with an attic antenna, you may need to limit your power to the antenna. This is primarily because of concerns about excessive RF exposure.

(Now start dreaming of that 100 foot tower...) ■

Charlotte
Hamfest and
ComputerFair
March 11 & 12, 2000

<http://www.w4bfb.org/hamfest.html>

Roanoke Division Director John Kannode N4MM Appointed ARRL VP

John Kannode N4MM, ARRL Roanoke Division director, was appointed to the position of League Vice President at the January League Board Meeting. John has been the division Director and Vice-Director for 19 years, and said he was seeking new challenges with the League. John's appointment has resulted in appointment "upgrades" around the section. I asked John to explain how the process works - KN4AQ

Every two years, the ARRL Board of Directors elects officers. These offices are President, 1st Vice President, two Vice Presidents, the International Affairs Vice President, the Executive Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Chief Financial Officer. If you read the minutes of the January 21-22, 2000 Board meeting, Minutes 8 through 16, you will get all the fine details. The minutes are on the ARRL Web site (www.arrl.org).

The officers are nominated by any of the 15 ARRL Directors. Most who are interested in running for a higher office usually declare that they are a candidate for a certain office about 6 months before the election. I let it be known to the other directors that I would be running for a Vice President position in January. I got a fellow Director to nominate me, in this case it was done by Kay WT3P, the Director from the Atlantic Division. I also nominated her for a Vice President position.

When a Director is elected to one of the officer positions, at the end of that meeting, that division's Vice Director automatically becomes the Director. The new Director (which is now Dennis Bodson W4PWF) advises the president of who he would like to have finish serving the remainder of his term. In most cases it is a SM or some other major League person in the Division. Dennis recommended Les Shattuck K4NK the SM from South Carolina. About 99.9% of the time, the League President will appoint the person recommended.

The new Vice Director then has to recommend to the Field Services Dept. Manager, Rosalie White, who he would like to finish his term. Les recommended Patricia Hensley N4ROS to finish serving the remainder of his term as South Carolina SM. ■

**SWL/Scanner Net
Returns to 146.64
Monday Nights at 9 pm**

Next Meeting: Monday, March 20

W4CC Wins NC Section Manager Job

Ballots have been counted

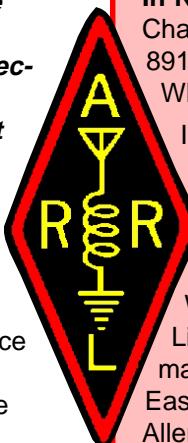
W1AW Bulletin

in contested section manager races in North Carolina and South Dakota.

In North Carolina, John Covington W4CC, of Charlotte outpolled G. Roger Allen, KD4MYE, 951 to 891. Covington will succeed outgoing SM Reed Whitten, AB4W.

In South Dakota, incumbent SM Roland Cory, WØYMB, of Mobridge defeated challenger Katherine "Trina" Blanks, KB0TYW, 146 to 88.

Candidates in six other ARRL sections ran uncontested. In Louisiana, Mickey Cox, K5MC, of West Monroe was elected to succeed retiring SM Lionel "Al" Oubre, K5DPG. Incumbent section managers reelected were Robert Leiden, KR2L, Eastern New York; Tuck Miller, K6ZEC, San Diego; Allen R. Breiner, W3TI, Eastern Pennsylvania; Ronald Phillips, AH6HN, Pacific; and Lynn Gahagan, AF4CD, Virginia. **Terms of office for successful candidates begin April 1, 2000.**



FCC Cites NC Hams

ARRL Web Extra

CHARLOTTE, NC: The FCC sent an Advisory Notice January 11, 2000, to Novice licensee Gary L. Hattaway, KC4DRA, citing reports that the licensee was observed operating on the 70-cm band. Riley Hollingsworth reminded the licensee of the frequency limitations that apply to Novice class licensees and said that failure to adhere to those frequency limitation could jeopardize his Amateur Radio license.

GREENSBORO, NC: The FCC notified Technician licensee Charles T. McLees Jr, KG4AXY, on January 3, 2000, to set aside his Amateur Radio license and return his application to pending status. McLees' license was granted November 20, 1998, but Riley Hollingsworth noted that the FCC may set aside an "erroneous grant" that resulted from "an inadvertent, ministerial processing error." Hollingsworth said the FCC has monitoring information alleging that McLees has been operating on the 160-meter band on 1.998 MHz, a frequency not available to Technician class licensees. The FCC alleged that such operation has occurred several times since December and gave McLees 20 days to explain. Hollingsworth reminded McLees that he has no authority to operate after receipt of the January 3, 2000, FCC letter. ■

Field Day Advance Plans

Yes, it's the premiere event of the ham radio year:

Field Day.

Jeff Wittich AC4ZO
Field Day Chairman

And it's time to start thinking about it. A little preparation has already been under way, but as you might expect, a lot is left to do. What we need to do immediately is identify key personnel. That would be Band Captains, and people to go for the bonus points. A few of the slots are already filled. Here's what we have so far:

BAND CAPTAINS:	BONUS POINTS:
10 and 15 meter CW and Phone	K4HF, W4IK
20 CW	AC4ZO
20 Phone	(OPEN)
40 CW	Neal???
40 Phone	WA4BPJ
80 CW	(OPEN)
80 Phone	KN4AQ
Digital	(OPEN)
Novice/Tech	(OPEN)
VHF	N1GMV
Emergency Power (SEE BELOW)	
Natural Power (OPEN)	
Satellite (OPEN)	
Publicity (OPEN)	
Message Relay (OPEN)	
Message to Section Manager (OPEN)	
W1AW Message (OPEN)	

OTHER IMPORTANT STUFF:

Chef (OPEN) (KF4HQS would like to help, but does not want to lead the effort)

Here's a brief description of what's required for the bonus points:

Emergency Power - Arrange for a generator to power your station. If you have a generator you are willing to provide for the event, please let me know, and I'll be the clearing house to get them into the hands of the stations that need them.

Natural Power - Charge a battery with solar cells. Arrange for a Band Captain to use it to make 5 of his contacts. That's it! If someone brings it, I'll be happy to use it.

Satellite - Make a contact through a satellite. I'll offer time on the 20 CW station for someone to do it. That way, nobody needs to set up an entire station for it. We've used RS-12 in past years, but any satellite would be OK.

Publicity - KN4AQ always does a tremendous job with this, and I hope will this year as well... I just didn't want to put him down without asking him first. Gary? *[I will, but it's time for someone else with an interest in media and PR to begin taking on this important job in RARS - KN4AQ]*

Message Relay - Go around to 10 operators at Field Day. Get them to fill out a radiogram form to the Section Manager or anyone else saying that they're having fun. Take the messages to 146.88 at 9:00pm.

Message to SM - I will write the message. We need someone to take it to 146.88 at 9:00pm to send it on the net.

Public Service Calendar

Here are the dates we have so far:

April 2nd: Crop Walk, Durham and Chapel Hill

April 8/9: MS Walk - Durham

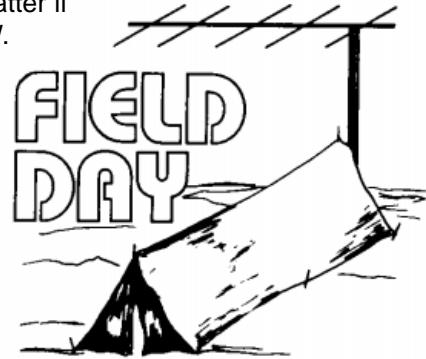
April 9: MS Walk - Raleigh, Chapel Hill **[Hamfest!]**

May 27: Run for Research - RTP (Glaxo)

June 2-4: NC Special Olympics Summer Games

W1AW message - We need someone to receive the ARRL bulletin Saturday morning. My station will be available for doing it, and it doesn't matter if we get it on phone or CW.

If you're new to ham radio, and have not been to a Field Day yet, you really must experience this. Many first timers drop by to see what all the fuss is about, and then next thing you know, they are calling their significant other, apologizing for being 6 hours late and pleading a case for overnight. Heh heh. It really is fun. The date is always the 4th full weekend in June. Mark your calendar now!



I plan to submit monthly updates to the *Exciter*, and include in each items of interest such as check-lists, operating techniques, or historical data. If you're a Field Day veteran, much of this will be old hat, and you're not likely to pick up much, but it's always so nice to see so many first timer each and every year. Let's get excited. [Jeff's e-mail address and phone number are on page 2 of the *Exciter*]■

RARS "CW Upgrade" Class Begins Feb. 28

RARS will not be running the regular late winter "Novice/Tech" class, since it falls just before restructuring obsoletes some of the class material.

However, we have received several requests to run the Morse code class to help current no-code Techs upgrade before April 15, and our code instructors, Charlie Brown W4VFJ, and Neal Fisher N4HAF, have agreed to do it.

Class begins Monday, February 28, and continues each Monday and Thursday, ending Thursday, April 6th. Class time: 7:00 pm until about 8:00 pm. Location: Nortel Technical Education Center for more info, contact Charlie Brown W4VFJ: e-mail W4VFJ@aol.com, or telephone 556-8551.



Board Meeting Minutes

January, 2000

Club Meeting Minutes

February, 2000

Jeff Wittich AC4ZO

A series of winter storms, including the nearly 20" snowfall on January 25th, resulted in the cancellation of both the January board meeting (after one attempt to reschedule) and the February club meeting. We'll try again for the February Board meeting and March club meeting.

Membership Cards Available at Club Meetings

RARS Membership Services Chairman Denyse Walter KG4CXR has produced some spiffy new RARS Membership cards. But there's a catch - you have to attend a club meeting in person to get one! They've got your name and call, and the club logo on the front, and a list of club officers on the back (so you know who to complain to) Want one? Drop her a line at kg4cxr@aol.com and she'll get one ready.



You too can have a RARS membership card, personally autographed by our President, WOUCE. The catch is that you have to get it in person at a club meeting!

HELP WANTED

Chris Waldrup KD4PBJ, engineer for radio stations WPTF/WQDR, is looking for another part-time engineer to help him out. The person should have RF experience, and be familiar with computers. Some bench repair experience would also be helpful.

Interested? Contact:

Chris Waldrup
WPTF Radio Engineering
876-0674 ext 337
3012 Highwoods Blvd
Raleigh 27604

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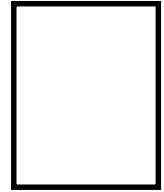
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the RARS

Exciter

Raleigh Amateur Radio Society, Inc.
PO Box 17124
Raleigh, North Carolina 27619



Fox Hunts Coming in April

Charles Scharlau NZØI

Two Foxhunts Coming to the Piedmont in April 2000

FIRST HUNT

Date: Saturday, April 1

Time: 10:00 AM to 1:30 PM

Place: Carrboro Community Park, Off of Hwy 54

This will be a great warm-up hunt for the...

SECOND HUNT

(All details for this hunt are tentative at this time!)

Date: Sunday, April 16

Time: 2:00 PM

Place: William B. Umstead State Park

The latest details can be found at www.qsl.net/nz0i or by contacting NZØI at nz0i@qsl.net .

Both of these are two-meter multi-transmitter on-foot hunts. At least five transmitters will be on the air. All ages are welcome. There is no charge for participation. A ham radio license and/or knowledge of radio equipment is not required.

Bring your own hunting equipment if you have it. If you have no equipment, several models of hand-held RDF antennas and attenuators will be available to try out. You will need a portable receiver capable of operating on 2 meters.

Both events will be limited to a relatively small area, so physical fitness will not be an important factor in these hunts. Hunting skill will count for more than fleetness of foot! Scoring will be the number of transmitters found, minus any non-transmitters identified as a transmitter. Ties will be settled by the lowest time.

Visit the web site www.qsl.net/nz0i often for hunt updates.■

SWL/Scanner Report

Kelly Mills AE4FG

The February meeting of the **Scanner/SWL SIG** was held on the 21th at the El Rodeo restaurant on Pleasant Valley Road in Raleigh.

Bob Zeher KE4JYV demonstrated a radio controlled clock that adjusts itself using the 60 KHz signal sent by WWV in Fort Collins, CO.

Tom McKee K4ZAD discussed his findings for a location for our **May shortwave listening "field day"** that will be held at a local park. Shortwave radios of all types will be demonstrated as well as different types of receiving antennas. Watch the **Exciter** and triangle.radio for announcements.

Kelly Mills and Charles Broyles then demonstrated a couple of Sangean portable shortwave receivers. There were nine people attending the meeting, and the meeting adjourned at about 9:00.

The March meeting will be held on the 20th (third Monday). Bruce Rosar will be giving a presentation on the new Motorola radio system in service at IBM in RTP. Join us at 6:30 for a meal at El Rodeo. The meeting will begin at 7:30.

The Scanner/SWL net is now being held each Monday night at 9:00 on the 146.64 repeater. Be sure to stop by and let us know what you have been monitoring. Everyone is welcome to join the net or our monthly meetings. You don't need to be an amateur radio operator to attend the meetings, so bring your monitoring equipment and questions to share with the group.

For more information, e-mail Bob Zeher (ke4jvy@juno.com) or Kelly Mills (ae4fg@hotmail.com), or call Bob at 844-9757.



Printing the Extra

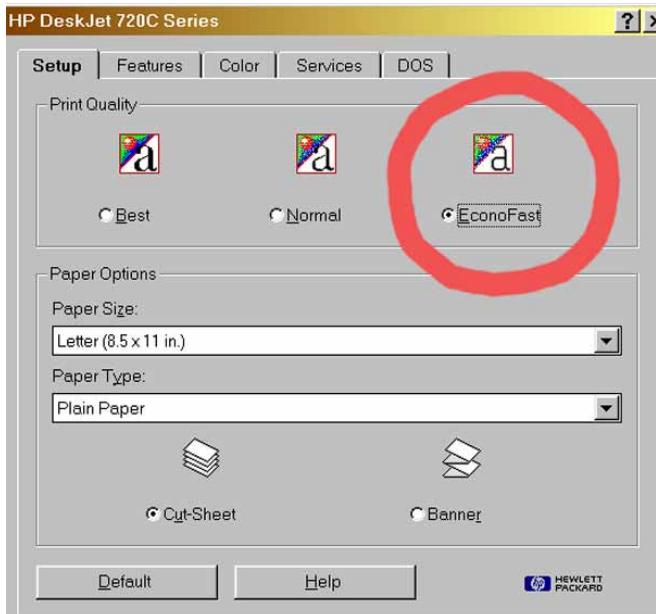
Gary Pearce KN4AQ

The **Exciter PDF** version has gotten some pretty good reviews, but there have been some criticisms as well. The biggest problem I've heard is *printing* the thing. I guess we'll pause a moment and give **Ikon** a pat on the back for the printing job they do each month. Turns out, it's not that easy.

Printing the **Exciter** uses a lot of ink - particularly black ink. A lot of that goes into the big, black banners on the front page and here on page 9, the beginning of the **Extra** section. Your computer screen doesn't seem to mind all the black, but it quickly drains the cartridge of your ink-jet printer, and leaves the paper soggy and warped. There's a lot of print-through, too, especially on the pictures, so you can't print on both sides of each sheet.

I hear you, I feel your pain. I have purchased stock in companies that supply black ink. But that won't stop me from making a few suggestions, before taking the step of making changes in the **Exciter** itself.

My main suggestion is to try printing in *Draft* mode. This will have a different name, different parameters, and different results in each brand and model printer. On my HP 722, it's called "EconoFast", and shows up in a menu that looks like this:



When I print in EconoFast, the printer lives up to that name. Printing is very fast, even across color pictures. And it appears to be using much less ink. The big, black bands come out a little grayish. Pictures look thin and somewhat fuzzier. Text is lighter, but still looks black and is easy to read. There's no print-through on ordinary paper (20 lb. ink-jet stock), so I can print on both sides.

All in all, it's a reasonably satisfying result. But the HP-722 is a moderately high-end printer. I'm sure there are lots of less-expensive models being used out there. **So I'm asking you all to be a "print laboratory"** - try printing this **Exciter** and report your results to me - kn4aq@arrl.net.

By the way, when I print the **Exciter**, I print on both sides of the paper. First I print all the odd-numbered pages (page 1, 3, 5...) on individual sheets. Then I turn them over, load them back into the printer, and print the even-numbered pages (2, 4, 6...) on the backs of the odd numbered pages. Finally, I staple them along the left hand edge, and the result is an **Exciter** that looks almost as good as the professionally printed version, and in full color.

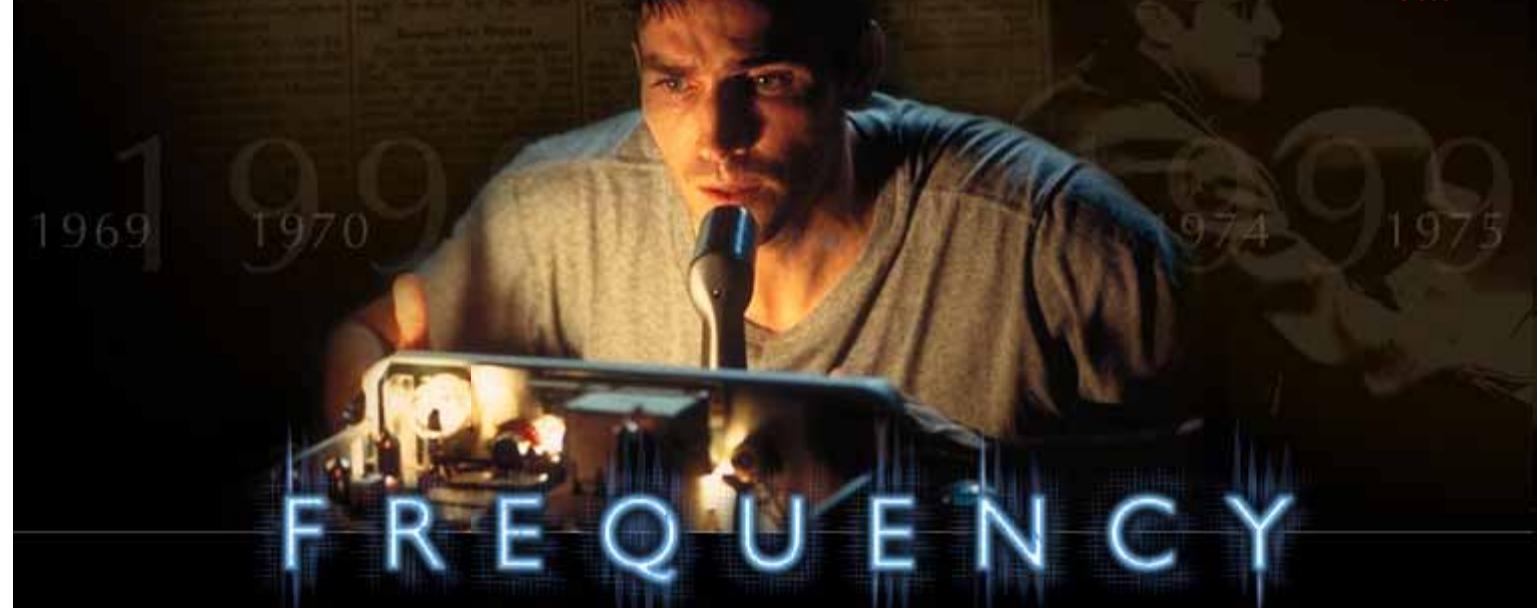
If you want to print a high-resolution version, you can, of course. You'll want to use at least 28 lb. paper, preferably somewhat glossy. And be prepared to spend a small fortune on ink. But you will have the world's most beautiful **Exciter** (well worth it, in my estimation). ■

The **Exciter PDF Extra** contains material that wouldn't fit in the printed version of the **Exciter**, which is normally limited by printing and postage costs to 8 pages.

You may also have noticed that the PDF version of the **Exciter** is in full color, on every page. And it costs little to produce and distribute. You might want to print it out on your own inkjet, so you'll have a copy to take with you to the... library. **KN4AQ**

New Movie Features Amateur Radio

ARRL Letter



Ham moviegoers report seeing previews for the new movie **Frequency**, starring Dennis Quaid and directed by Gregory Hoblit, that's set for an April release. The ARRL was consulted in the interests of accuracy and came up with an unused W2 call sign for the movie's protagonist to use. The movie also recently got a plug on Entertainment Tonight.

Frequency is billed as a sci-fi thriller, but boatanchor fans may believe the movie was made just for them. The gist of it is that a long-dead father and his adult son meet up on the airwaves via ham radio (during the mother of all sunspot cycles), and the son tries to prevent his father's death by altering the past. Both also attempt to prevent a

murder. It reportedly winds off into the ozone after that, but we don't want to spoil it for anyone.

According to someone who caught one of the trailers, the son (Quaid) uses an old Heathkit sans cabinet. "I guess the idea is to nail down the point that this is an old radio because you can see all the tubes glowing right out in the open," said Avery Comarow, W3AVE, who caught the preview.

Information on **Frequency** is available at:
<http://www.frequencymovie.com>

Thanks to Mark G. Ewell KC5IZN and Avery Comarow W3AVE (via John Dilks, K2TQN).

Letters

Gary ... I've been organizing my stuff (and things, too) and just realized that the January Exciter has a date of "January 1900" ... please oh please oh please tell me that:

- 1) I'm not (can't possibly be the first this far into January) the first person to notice this / point it out, and
- 2) you knew about it and it was your own "gotcha".

OTOH, if I *am* the 1st person to "find" it ... what's my prize??? <Grin>

Thanks by the way ... this has got to be one of the FINEST newsletters (not this particular one, but all of 'em) that I've ever had the privilege to read, on any subject. I really look forward to getting 'em.

Phil Zaleskin KF4IUU

Thanks, Phil. And I'm pleased to announce that the Exciter is now fully Y2K compliant - KN4AQ

Hams Help with Winter Storm

January's record snowfall caused plenty of trouble in the Triangle, but the situation was even worse to the Southwest. Montgomery County lost power and communications, and requested Amateur Radio assistance for several days. This report came from NC ARRL Section Manager Reed Whitten AB4W:

Gene Scarborough, W4YBQ, ARES Area 10 District Emergency Coordinator indicated that Sgt. Joe Meachum of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department (also N4ZRE) reported that 13 Amateur Radio operators from Alamance, Davidson, Montgomery, Moore, Randolph, and Stanley Counties were active on Saturday. He asked that thanks be conveyed to them for a job well done.

ARES assistance had been requested due to a failure of the Montgomery County Public Safety communications system.

Gene arranged Friday for the loan of a commercial repeater and 20 portable radios programmed for one of the Montgomery County frequencies. Dan Christie with Piedmont Communications, Durham NC, provided these radios. They are being used to provide communications to National Guard vehicles within about 15 - 20 miles of Troy.

Amateur Radio operators traveled with National Guard vehicles into areas still without reliable communications. Gene has asked that ARES Emergency Coordinators in adjacent counties alert their ARES members for possible continuing needs in Montgomery County.

Amateur Radio SKYWARN nets have been active throughout the recent weather events. Several counties have activated ARES for backup and shelter operations.

Reed Whitten, AB4W
North Carolina Section Manager



Assistant Exciter Editor Wanted

Gary Pearce KN4AQ
Exciter Editor

Now that I've built up this *Exciter* empire, I'm looking for an assistant to help with some of the preparation, and to carry things through in those months when work, emergency or vacation keep me from being able to complete an issue on time.

You'll need to be fairly well equipped - this isn't a novice assignment, but I will help you get set up and trained on how I'm using the software.

I'm using Adobe Pagemaker (v6.5), and Adobe Acrobat to make the pdf files. I prepare some of the graphics and photos in Adobe Photoshop (v5), and some graphics in CorelDRAW 8. I'm using a fairly beefy computer (a 500 MHz Pentium III, and it's swift, but a slower machine will work fine). The average Exciter uses up about 30 MB of hard drive space, and I archive them on CD.

Be part of the Exciting Exciter Team! Send me a note at:

kn4aq@arrl.net.

TRIAD Spotter Training April 15



We will have our Guilford County spotter training on April 15, 2000 at Westover Church in Greensboro, NC, from 12:00 noon to a little after 2:00 PM. The session is free of charge and all are welcome to attend. For directions to Westover Church, go to www.westoverchurch.com.

For more information on Triad Skywarn, go to www.netpath.net/~skywarn.

Bill Boyes KB1G
Emergency Coordinator
Triad Skywarn

Snapshots

Bob Zeher KE4JWY, one of the honchos at the SWL/Scanner SIG, keeps things busy and interesting at meetings (4th Monday) and on the net (Mondays at 9 pm on 146.64).

Here he's showing pictures of a radio museum in England taken by a friend.